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Drinking Rituals, Masculinity, and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany

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ABSTRACT. During the Third Reich, alcohol served as both a literal and metaphorical lubricant for acts of violence and atrocity by the men of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA), the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), and the police. Scholars have extensively documented its use and abuse on the part of the perpetrators. For the SA, the SS, and the police, the consumption of alcohol was part of a ritual that not only bound the perpetrators together, but also became a facilitator of acts of "performative masculinity"—a type of masculinity expressly linked to physical or sexual violence. In many respects, the relationship among alcohol, masculinity, sex, and violence permeated all aspects of the Nazi killing process in the camps, the ghettos, and the killing fields. After the outbreak of war in September 1939, such practices were increasingly radicalized, with drinking and celebratory rituals becoming key elements for these closed male communities of perpetrators, who used them to prepare for acts of mass killing and, ultimately, genocide.

Für die Gewalt- und Gräueltaten der Männer von SA, SS und Polizei während des Dritten Reiches diente Alkohol im wörtlichen wie auch im übertragenen Sinn als Schmiermittel. In der Forschung ist der Gebrauch und Missbrauch von Alkohol seitens der Täter ausführlich dokumentiert worden. Alkoholkonsum gehörte für die SA, die SS und die Polizei nicht nur zu einem Ritual, das sie als Täter zusammenschweißte, sondern half ihnen auch zu Taten „performativer Männlichkeit"—eine Männlichkeit, die ausdrücklich mit physischer oder sexueller Gewalt verbunden war. Diese Verbindung zwischen Alkohol, Männlichkeit, Sex und Gewalt durchdrang alle Aspekte der nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungspolitik in den Lagern, Ghettos und auf den „killing fields". Nach dem Kriegsausbruch im September 1939 wurden solche Praktiken zusehends radikalisiert: In diesen geschlossenen männlichen Tätergemeinschaften wurden Trinken und feierliche Rituale zu Schlüsselelementen, um sich auf Massenmord und letzten Endes Genozid vorzubereiten.

DURING the Third Reich, alcohol served as both a literal and metaphorical lubricant for creating camaraderie and contributing to acts of violence and atrocity by the men of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA), the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), and the police, and its use and abuse among the perpetrators has been documented extensively in the historical record. By contrast, the relationship between drinking rituals, violence, and perceptions of masculinity among the perpetrators has received much less attention; it constitutes the focus of this article, which explores connections among the perpetrators' consumption of alcohol, their acts of violence, and the use of celebratory ritual as expressions of camaraderie and manifestations of masculinity.

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From the earliest days of the National Socialist movement, drinking rituals played a visible and important role in acts of violence aimed at the Nazi Party's putative enemies, whether committed by Stormtroopers on the streets of Berlin and Hamburg before the "seizure of power"; by members of the SS in the concentration camps, as they prepared for and celebrated their brutalization of prisoners; or by policemen in unit bars in the occupied East, on the fringes of Jewish ghettos, and in the killing fields themselves. For the SA, the SS, and the police, the consumption of alcohol was part of a ritual that bound the perpetrators together and became a key ingredient in acts of "performative masculinity," a type of masculinity expressly linked to acts of physical and sexual violence.[1] In the prewar context, drinking rituals served as a means of fostering male bonding and creating group solidarity, and they often found expression in acts of political violence. After the outbreak of war, such practices became more radicalized, as these closed male communities of perpetrators used drinking and celebratory rituals to commemorate acts of mass killing and, ultimately, genocide.[2] In his survey of comradeship in the *Wehrmacht*, Thomas Kühne has remarked that "excessive drinking, tales of sexual adventures, misogynistic rhetoric, rowdyism, even collective rape—all this gained its social momentum from being celebrated—practiced, reported, or applauded—*together*."[3] What was true for the German armed forces, a demographically diverse group of some eighteen million men, proved even more valid for the much smaller and largely self-selected men of the Nazi Party's paramilitary arms and the German police, where the consumption of alcohol and drinking rituals became "central to a pattern of male bonding" among the perpetrators, a key part of celebratory ritual conducted prior to, during, and after mass killings.[4] Heavy drinking as a manifestation of masculinity may have found its apotheosis under the Third Reich, but the connection between the consumption of alcohol and perceptions of manliness predated the so-called Nazi seizure of power.

The connections among alcohol, martial identity, and entry into manhood were anchored in Germany in "leave-taking rituals," in which military recruits solicited donations from the local community prior to their entry into the military, which they then used for a "farewell drink" or "drinking bout."[5] In a similar fashion, the relationship between alcohol and acts of "performative" violence played a crucial role in Weimar Germany, as paramilitary groups from both ends of the political spectrum battled one another on the streets of German cities.[6] On the right, the *Freikorps*, mostly groups of demobilized soldiers, battled against Communist Red Guards with a brutality that facilitated acts of mass atrocity on both sides. In the words of Ernst von Salomon: "We saw red: we roared out our songs and threw grenades after them. We no longer had anything of human decency left in our hearts. The land where we had lived groaned with destruction … And so we returned, swaggering, drunken,

[1]Susan Jeffords, "Performative Masculinities, or, 'After a Few Times You Won't Be Afraid of Rape at All," *Discourse* 13, no. 2 (1991): 102-18.

[2]Robert J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 432.

[3]Thomas Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler's Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 293.

[4]Lifton, *Nazi Doctors*, 443-44.

[5]Ute Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks: Modern Germany, Military Conscription and Civil Society*, trans. Andrew Boreham and Daniel Brückenhaus (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 171-72.

[6]Mark Jones, *Founding Weimar: Violence and the German Revolution, 1918–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 4.

laden with plunder."[7] In von Salomon's testimony, camaraderie was established through acts of vocal and physical aggression and then celebrated with alcohol, plunder, and masculine swagger. The experience of the *Freikorps* found repeated expression during Weimar in the SA's "celebration of a heroic and martial masculinity," as well as in its members' renown as "heroes of bar-room brawls."[8]

It is important to note that the connections among drinking rituals, violence, and masculinity was not a specific German phenomenon, but rather a broader manifestation of European culture. The psychologists Russell Lemle and Marc Mishkind have noted that, in Western culture, drinking is viewed as "a key component of the male sex role," and that "men are encouraged to drink, and in so doing are perceived as masculine."[9] On the one hand, drinking is an act of male prowess, in which "heavy drinking" and "greater consumption is equated with greater masculinity."[10] On the other hand, as another study has found, "alcohol-related violence perpetrated by men may help to establish and maintain a gendered identity … Violence and alcohol use simultaneously embodied an image of the masculine. Commitment to aggressive and violent practices as a means of establishing a masculine reputation in a peer group context was evident."[11]

Such practices existed throughout Europe, but the glorification of martial virtues and violence emerged as defining characteristics of the National Socialist ideal of hypermasculinity, especially in the SS and the police.[12] With respect to the Third Reich, numerous historians have used the term *hypermasculinity* to refer to the Nazi male gender ideal, whether with regard to prowess in impregnating German women or to the longer standing tradition of Prussian militarism.[13] For example, Jane Caplan has identified a "troubling relationship between power and masculinity, between absolute power and hypermasculinity—cultivated by the SS" and present in the concentration camp system.[14] The linkage between hypermasculinity and militarism was critical in two respects. First, it promoted a concept of martial masculinity, or an exaggerated belief in the necessity of merciless brutality against one's

[7]Quoted in Nigel H. Jones, *A Brief History of the Birth of the Nazis: How the* Freikorps *Blazed a Trail for Hitler* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2004), 135.

[8]Yves Müller, "Männlichkeit und Gewalt in der SA am Beispiel der 'Köpenicker Blutwoche,'" in *SA-Terror als Herrschaftssicherung*, ed. Stefan Hördler (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2013), 130; Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI-Lingua Tertii Imperii*, trans. Martin Brady (London: Athlone Press, 2000), 3. Klemperer uses the expression "heroes of bar-room brawls" in his description of the SA.

[9]Russell Lemle and Marc E. Mishkind, "Alcohol and Masculinity," *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 6, no. 4 (1989): 214. Lemle and Mishkind cite a study of Finnish men published in 1959 as one example of the broader generalizability of their findings. For a discussion of the relationship among alcohol, aggression, and masculinity, see Kenneth Polk, "Males and Honor Contest Violence," *Homicide Studies* 3, no. 1 (1999): 6-29.

[10]Lemle and Mishkind, "Alcohol and Masculinity," 215.

[11]Robert Peralta, Lori A. Tuttle, and Jennifer L. Steele, "At the Intersection of Interpersonal Violence, Masculinity, and Alcohol Use: The Experiences of Heterosexual Male Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence," *Violence Against Women* 14, no. 4 (2010): 390, 401.

[12]Christina Wieland, *The Fascist State of Mind and the Manufacturing of Masculinity: A Psychoanalytic Approach* (London: Routledge, 2015), 26.

[13]Geoffrey Cocks, *The State of Health: Illness in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 105.

[14]Jane Caplan, "Gender and the Concentration Camps" in *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories*, ed. Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann (New York: Routledge, 2012), 86.

enemies.[15] For example, in a letter to his wife discussing the mass murder of the Jews, SS-*Obersturmführer* Karl Kretschmer exclaimed: "We have got to appear tough here or else we will lose the war"—and then added: "*There is no room for pity of any kind*."[16] Second, the war increasingly radicalized this concept of hypermasculinity, as the SS and the police emerged as "uncompromising" agents of annihilation in the East, where the regime's putative enemies, especially the Jews, became "free game" (*Freiwild*).[17]

In contrast to those who use the term *hypermasculinity*, other scholars have focused on the concept of *hegemonic masculinity* to describe the interplay among gender, power, and community that creates a dominant, if contested and malleable, paradigm of masculinity within a given social and cultural context.[18] Though it accepts the premise of hegemonic masculinity, this article adopts instead the term *hypermasculinity* to describe the Nazi masculine ideal, framing it within Nazi discourse that established a specific racial, biological, and gender ideal with respect to both masculinity and femininity. Race became, in this regard, a key marker in the creation of a "hierarchy of masculinities," and it was tied to a belief in superior virility.[19] The concept of *militarized masculinity* has similarly been tied to the "hyper-masculine qualities" of the soldier, "represent[ing] a process whereby the manly conquered the unmanly."[20]

Regardless of the term used to define masculinity in the Third Reich, the manner in which masculinity emerged as a social and cultural ideal, and the way in which this ideal created expectations and influenced behavior, are most crucial, especially with respect to the conduct of war and the carrying out of genocide. In a conversation with the German conservative revolutionary and political writer Hermann Rauschning, Adolf Hitler argued: "War is eternal, war is universal … War is life … War is the origin of all things." Combining this worldview with a vision of masculinity, the German academic Ewald Banse similarly claimed that war was "a purifying bath of steel from which new impulses arise … an infallible test of fitness for manhood."[21] Such appeals—whether found in Banse's book *Wehrwissenschaft*

[15] For a discussion of militarized masculinity, see Björn Krondorfer and Edward Westermann, "Soldiering: Men," in *Gender: War*, ed. Andrea Petö (New York: Macmillan, 2017), 19-35.

[16] Quoted in Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *"The Gold Old Days": The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders*, trans. Deborah Burnstone (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 165. Emphasis in the original.

[17] Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*, trans. Tom Lampert (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010); Edward B. Westermann, *Hitler's Police Battalions: Enforcing Racial Policy in the East* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); Klaus-Michael Mallmann, Volker Rieβ, and Wolfram Pyta, eds., *Deutscher Osten 1939–1945: Der Weltanschauungskrieg in Photos and Texten* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003), 137.

[18] For an excellent review of this research, see R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 829-59. The term *hypermasculinity* can be seen as a specific manifestation of militarized masculinity or as a type of hegemonic masculinity; it also has been used to refer to the B Specials, i.e., Protestant paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland that engaged in extensive acts of political violence. See Fidelma Ashe, "Gendering War and Peace: Militarized Masculinities in Northern Ireland," *Men and Masculinities* 15, no. 3 (2012): 237.

[19] Jacqueline M. Moore, *Cow Boys and Cattle Men: Class and Masculinities on the Texas Frontier, 1865–1900* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 9. Moore's claim in this case pertains to the nineteenth-century Texas frontier, but it is equally applicable to the case of the Nazis.

[20] Michael Stewart, "The Soldier's Life: Early Byzantine Masculinity and the Manliness of War," *Byzantina Symmeikta* 26, no. 1 (2016): 11, 37.

[21] N. Gangulee, *The Mind and Face of Nazi Germany* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1942), 128-29. Banse was the author of *Wehrwissenschaft: Einführung in eine neue nationale Wissenschaft* (Leipzig: Armanenverlag, 1933).

(*Military Science*) or in more popular forms, including World War I veteran Ernst Jünger's bestselling memoir, *In Stahlgewittern* (*Storm of Steel*)—were intended to create an indissoluble linkage among war, masculinity, and comradeship in the minds of the reader.[22] Similarly, the National Socialists exerted great efforts to link the concepts of the martial with the masculine, and to define the people's community as mainly a "masculine martial community" (*maskuline Kampfgemeinschaft*) in order to infuse soldiers with the regime's ideal.[23] As part of this process, drinking rituals became a key expression of masculine identity in paramilitary and police formations; celebratory rituals were used as well to create a closed community of male comradeship among the perpetrators of genocide.

Masculinity and Alcohol in Germany

The connection between concepts of masculinity and heavy drinking extends back to antiquity and can be found in the writings of the Roman philosopher Seneca.[24] Likewise, the tie between masculinity and a man's ability to hold his liquor predated the Third Reich and was a "class-cutting phenomenon" in German society during the *Kaiserreich*.[25] In imperial Germany, taverns became sites of both heavy drinking and ritual—a trend exemplified in the drinking practices and ceremony of the *Burschenschaften* (student fraternities), where individual annual consumption of a thousand liters of beer was not exceptional.[26] In a similar way, drinking among members of the nineteenth-century working classes was "an essential ingredient of masculine sociability" that served both physiological and psychological functions, with the tavern emerging as an important locus of social and political interaction.[27]

In the city of Hamburg, bars usually capable of seating only ten to twenty people became identified not only by the class or occupation of their customers, but also with specific political parties, especially those on the Left, as well as ones devoted to antisemitic agitation.[28] For patrons of these establishments, the bar remained a location of male contestation, political discourse, and social bonding. In addition, bars are, by their very nature, "high-risk locations for alcohol-related violence especially for [verbal or physical] aggression by men towards other men."[29] The politicization of such spaces thus tied together these sites and their clientele, as political rhetoric became entwined with, and manifested in, acts of public violence.

Taverns and beer halls as sites of political exhortation and mobilization played an important role for party activities from across the political spectrum during the Weimar Republic.[30]

[22]Ernst Jünger, *In Stahlgewittern* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1920).

[23]Frank Werner, "'Hart müssen wir hier draussen sein': Soldatische Männlichkeit im Vernichtungskrieg, 1941–1944," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 34, no. 1 (2008): 15.

[24]Lemle and Mishkind, "Alcohol and Masculinity," 214.

[25]Hasso Spode, *Die Macht der Trunkenheit: Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte des Alkohols in Deutschland* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1993), 261.

[26]Spode, *Macht der Trunkheit*, 262.

[27]James Roberts, *Drink, Temperance, and the Working Class in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 47, 129.

[28]Richard J. Evans, ed., *Kneipengespräche im Kaiserreich: Die Stimmungsberichte der Hamburger Politischen Polizei, 1892–1914* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989), 20-33. Evans notes that, by the turn of the century, beer halls had taken on an increasing role as sites for political activity and mobilization.

[29]Peter Miller et al., "Alcohol, Masculinity, Honour and Male Barroom Aggression in an Australian Sample," *Drug and Alcohol Review* 33, no. 2 (2014): 136.

[30]Herbert Freudenthal, *Vereine in Hamburg: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Volkskunde der Geselligkeit* (Hamburg: Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, 1968), 334-37.

For the National Socialists and the paramilitary SA, political theater, alcohol, and violence were intrinsic elements of public meetings held in beer halls throughout the country. In the case of the SA, the *Saalschutz* (meeting or hall protection) served a defensive *and* offensive role, but with both roles tied explicitly to the threat or actual use of force. One Berlin stormtrooper remembered an attack on a Communist meeting in which SA members in the crowd unsuccessfully tried to shout down the speaker before changing tactics, using folding chairs as weapons and launching beer mugs at their Communist adversaries to break up the event.[31] Victor Klemperer, a preeminent diarist of life in the Third Reich, argued, in fact, that the very nature of the wounds received in such battles could be used to identify the political affiliation of the combatants.[32]

In the case of mass meetings in beer halls, the act of attempting to shout down one's opponent was a contest for vocal dominance—a battle that was, in no small part, fueled by the alcohol that spectators consumed during hours-long gatherings with interminable speeches. It was usually the dominant male, or "the most brutal comrade," who gained "the greatest respect" in such settings.[33] As Richard Bessel has observed, these acts of political violence were "an expression of *male* politics" in which "toughness, readiness to stand one's ground and 'never quit the field' … were values associated with manliness … Part of the success of the Nazi movement was … its ability to represent such male cultural values in the political arena."[34]

In the Weimar period, beer halls and taverns emerged as locations dominated by expressions of "male politics" and as waypoints for acts of political violence.[35] These locales served as assembly sites for members of the SA, as places for recruitment, planning, and propaganda distribution, and as the launching point for "bloody political acts" (*politische Bluttaten*).[36] Albert Krebs, a Nazi district leader (*Gauleiter*) in Hamburg from 1923 to 1933, described the importance of the first mass meetings for the city's SA membership in the mid-1920s: "Individual Nazis periodically needed the stimulus of a mass meeting in which their secret wishes, hopes, and dreams would be openly expressed and their courage, sense of comradeship, and willingness to sacrifice would be enhanced." He obliquely mentioned as well the specter of violence at these events, noting the need for "protection against disturbances." Such precautions proved especially important when mass meetings were

[31]Peter Longerich, *Die braunen Bataillone: Geschichte der SA* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1989), 119-20.

[32]Klemperer, *LTI*, 3. Klemperer states that Nazis received head wounds "inflicted by beer mugs or chair legs," whereas Communists could be identified by "a stiletto wound in the lung."

[33]Thomas Kühne, "The Pleasure of Terror," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. Pamela Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d'Almeida (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 239. See also Longerich, *Die braunen Bataillone*, 22-23.

[34]Richard Bessel, "Violence as Propaganda: The Role of the Storm Troopers in the Rise of National Socialism," in *The Formation of the Nazi Constituency, 1919–1933*, ed. Thomas Childers (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1986), 144. Emphasis in the original.

[35]Dirk Walter, *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt: Judenfeindschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1999), 214. For a contemporary depiction of this process in popular culture, see Walter Schönstedt, *Auf der Flucht erschossen: Ein SA Roman 1933* (Paris: Editions du Carrefour, 1934), 11-32. This popular novel, though written by a German Communist exile in Paris and with an anti-Nazi theme, still captures the atmosphere of the *Sturmlokal* as a site of male camaraderie, ritual, and political violence.

[36]Sven Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde. Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im italienischen Squadrismus und in der deutschen SA* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), 449.

held in working-class areas, where they often resulted in "pitched battles with Communist harassment squads."[37]

Taverns became sites of political mobilization in both a theoretical and a practical sense. The political materials exchanged and the alcohol consumed combined to fuel tirades among the members, but this invective was not supposed to be confined to the barroom alone. Instead, such discussions were intended, as one SA publication put it, to result in the creation of an "SA man who also had the faculty for revolutionary combat [revolutionäres Kämpfertum]."[38] Participation in these types of paramilitary groups created an environment in which personal identity was linked to acts of political violence, resulting in the creation of a "culture of violence" and the formation of a normative "militarized identity."[39] This process of political mobilization embraced several elements of masculine identity, including male camaraderie, rituals involving alcohol and song, as well as the creation of a space saturated with verbal ferocity, only waiting for an opportunity to find release in acts of physical violence.

These SA sites became "exclusive male communities," serving as places where individuals could demonstrate their masculinity through their knowledge of weapons or their prowess in drinking.[40] As Christopher Dillon has remarked: "Vast consumption of alcohol could fuel an intense, fiercely emotional camaraderie within local *Stürme* [SA units], where banter and masculine horseplay came to the fore. Heavy drinking sessions might spill over into 'punitive expeditions' to working-class enclaves and thence public violence."[41] In this regard, the barroom became more than just a site for political rhetoric: more important, it became a realm of political mobilization and radicalization, where words were turned into concrete deeds of political violence. "Unleashing brutality in bar brawls, fighting together furiously in the streets and committing murder together," Thomas Kühne has written, was not just a mechanism for social bonding and male comradeship: such "ruthless violence guaranteed public attention and established community" as well.[42]

During the Weimar period, the activities of the city's Stormtroopers reflected the growing reliance on acts of political violence, and included physical-fitness training regimens, marches, and field exercises, with an increasing emphasis on political indoctrination and public demonstrations. Such military ritual served an important function within the SA, especially in the tavern.[43] The martial and partisan focus of such efforts led to the decline of "cultural events" and to a growing reliance on "fellowship evenings" (*Kameradschaftsabende*) to promote group bonding within the SA.[44] Such evenings centered on the consumption of alcohol, male bravado, and song, and they emerged after 1939 as

[37] Albert Krebs, *The Infancy of Nazism: The Memoirs of Ex-Gauleiter Albert Krebs, 1923–1933*, ed. and trans. William Sheridan Allen (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), 57-58.

[38] Longerich, *Die braunen Bataillone*, 142.

[39] Malose Langa and Gillian Eagle, "The Intractability of Militarised Masculinity: A Case Study of Former Self-Defence Unit Members in the Kathorus Area, South Africa," *South African Journal of Psychology* 38, no. 1 (2008): 155.

[40] Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde*, 469, 471.

[41] Christopher Dillon, *Dachau and the SS: A Schooling in Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 183.

[42] Kühne, "The Pleasure of Terror," 239.

[43] Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde*, 458.

[44] Freudenthal, *Vereine in Hamburg*, 337.

important rituals for celebrating both the masculinity of the individual, as well as acts of performative violence in the camps, the ghettos, and the killing fields during the war.

Fellowship Evenings, Alcohol, and Violence

Jürgen Matthäus was one of the first historians to emphasize the importance of such "fellowship evenings" for the National Socialist Order Police (*Ordnungspolizei*), and to highlight the role of this activity as a formal ritual designed to promote internal group cohesion in the wake of mass killing operations in the East.[45] Further study of fellowship evenings and their use by various party and police organizations prior to and during the war offers additional insights into the important ritualistic nature, as well as the psychological and social functions, of such gatherings in the National Socialist terror apparatus. As noted, the use of fellowship evenings originated with the Stormtroopers during the earliest years of the Nazi movement, and they later extended to SS personnel in the concentration camp system, as well as to SS and police units involved in the invasion and occupation of the East.[46]

For the SA during the "time of struggle" before Hitler's ascension to the chancellorship in 1933, taverns became ritual bonding sites, often serving as the first and last stops of the day for these men. For unemployed SA men with families, the taverns became sites for reasserting their masculinity away from the "guilt inducing stares of any dependent family members" or neighbors "who might be lurking at home."[47] In addition to their social function, the SA taverns and SA *Heime* (homes) served as designated meeting sites, with a requirement that all members appear twice a week to receive orders and attend a weekly fellowship evening. Despite an official prohibition against alcohol consumption while on duty, such prohibitions could, in practice, be quietly ignored, at least with regard to the consumption of beer.[48]

In his analysis of the SA, Andrew Wackerfuss has noted that "contemporary reports and letters from Stormtroopers often mentioned comrades' extreme drunkenness, saying they had imbibed on the way to the tavern or that those eating supper in the back room drank with their meal, but in fact the line between being on or off duty rarely existed for men living such an all-encompassing lifestyle."[49] In this respect, the ability to drink large amounts of alcohol and to "hold one's liquor," without demonstrating visible effects of intoxication, served as one marker of the individual's masculinity, especially for those suffering from the psychological emasculation of unemployment resulting from the inability of the head of the household to provide for his family.[50] In such cases, the object was not to drink oneself into a stupor or to lose control of one's faculties, but rather to demonstrate the ability to continue to function *despite* one's level of alcohol consumption—i.e., it was a visible sign of superior manliness. It was no coincidence that the SA taverns became male-dominated sites, and that female "visitors" were expressly prohibited from engaging in such masculine

[45]Jürgen Matthäus, Konrad Kwiet, Jürgen Förster, and Richard Breitman, *Ausbildungsziel Judenmord? "Weltanschauliche Erziehung" von SS, Polizei, Waffen-SS im Rahmen der Endlösung* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2003), 61-64.

[46]Westermann, *Hitler's Police Battalions*, 118-20.

[47]Andrew Wackerfuss, *Stormtrooper Families: Homosexuality and Community in the Early Nazi Movement* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2015), 200.

[48]Longerich, *Die braunen Bataillone*, 127.

[49]Wackerfuss, *Stormtrooper Families*, 201.

[50]Abraham Plotkin, *An American in Hitler's Berlin: Abraham Plotkin's Diary, 1932-33*, ed. Catherine Collomp and Bruno Groppo (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 58.

demonstrations, limited instead to soft drinks (*Limonade*) or water in what was a clear reflection of segregated gender norms.[51]

Fellowship evenings proved to be one mechanism for weaving together these "communities of violence," and they were organized around specific political and martial themes and speakers. These events included a ritual involving military formation of the members, roll call and uniform inspections, and the announcement of orders. The next portion of the program involved a guest speaker, e.g., veteran testimonies about World War I. The recitation of heroic combat narratives served to underline the connections among war, masculinity, and comradeship. A concluding ritual included the singing of SA and Nazi Party songs, a communal act demonstrating male bonding among the participants. According to Peter Longerich, "These training objectives make it apparent that National Socialist depictions of the time of struggle testify to raw masculinity as the ideal of the SA and to robust carousing, while a combative nature dominated the scene."[52] Once again, masculinity, the ability to hold one's alcohol, and a willingness to fight all emerged as the hallmarks of such men and of the entire SA. In this sense, heavy drinking highlighted one's masculinity and toughness instead of serving as a manifestation of weakness or loss of self-control.

For the SA men gathered in taverns, the ritual use of alcohol under such circumstances served as a powerful reinforcing mechanism for increasing such feelings of hostility.[53] At the same time, Sven Reichardt has argued, "through their violent actions, the unit's members could confirm the meaning of comradeship. To that extent the community forming violence was a premise for ideological integration: through his actions, the individual became successively more entangled in the SA, which operated as a closed community in which security and violence, hierarchy and solidarity were closely interwoven."[54] Such acts of "community violence" found later expression during killing actions by SS and police units in the occupied East, where murder became a rite of passage for new members to demonstrate their hardness and toughness as "real men."[55]

The prewar activities and rituals of the SA and the SS created a model for the actions of the Nazi Party's paramilitary and police forces after 1939. Such activities also established a pattern of alcohol consumption, violence, and celebratory ritual that became further radicalized during the war by the absence of traditional limitations and moral restraints—a process promoted by two factors. First, many of the SA's "hard-core members were transferred to other killing institutions" upon the outbreak of the war.[56] Second, and perhaps more important, the masculine ideal celebrated by the SA mirrored the Nazi movement's vision of the

[51]Longerich, *Die braunen Bataillone*, 127. Beer was the primary drink for such occasions, and SA men who demonstrated an inability to drink and maintain control were served low-acohol-content bier (*Malzbier*) instead.

[52]Ibid., 141.

[53]"Heavy Drinking Rewires Brain, Increasing Susceptibility to Anxiety Problems," *Science News* (Sept. 2, 2012) (https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/09/120902143143.htm).

[54]Sven Reichardt, "Violence and Community: A Micro-Study on Nazi Storm Troopers," *Central European History* 46, no. 2 (2013): 276.

[55]Sara Berger, *Experten der Vernichtung: Das T4-Reinhardt-Netzwerk in den Lagern Belzec, Sobibor und Treblinka* (Hamburg: Verlag des Hamburger Instituts für Sozialforschung, 2013), 336. Berger also provides an excellent discussion of the use of alcohol and the concept of comradeship among the camps' SS guards.

[56]Daniel Siemens, *Stormtroopers: A New History of Hitler's Brownshirts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 237. For a discussion of this practice within the Order Police, see Westermann, *Hitler's Police Battalions*, 62-66.

political soldier. As Detlev Peukert once argued, this exaltation of the "'soldierly' man, with an inner hardness," eventually found its ultimate "fulfillment in acts of terror and mass slaughter."[57] This concept of "hardness," of being "unconditionally tough" or "tough and determined men," were defining features of masculinity within the Nazi Party's paramilitary organizations, and they extended to the entire SS and police complex—traits that were elevated to virtues by Hitler and Nazi propaganda, especially after the outbreak of the war.[58] Such expectations existed for SS and policemen involved in mass murder in the East, as well as for SS personnel in the concentration camps. In the case of the former, one member of an *Einsatzkommando* during the invasion of Poland testified that his superior had justified the reprisal killings of Poles by exclaiming: "In this action, anyone can prove he's a real man."[59] In the case of the latter, Angelika Benz has contended, "masculinity, defined through strength, control, determination and an iron hand, were demonstrated and experienced in acts of power … and unyielding toughness as well as the willingness to do things that were too difficult for others."[60]

Violence, Alcohol, and Celebratory Ritual in the Concentration Camps

Like their erstwhile allies in the SA, early members of the SS, especially those working in the concentration camps, often exhibited the negative characteristics associated with alcohol consumption, drinking rituals, and violence. With the creation of Dachau in March 1933, abusive behavior—ranging from notorious "welcome beatings" inflicted on prominent newcomers, to summary executions of those "shot while trying to escape," to quotidian acts of brutality—set the tone of the camp, despite its ostensibly rehabilitative function. Upon their assumption of control over the camp, Timothy Ryback has remarked, "the SS men exercised their newfound authority that evening with drink and gunfire," a celebratory ritual that linked alcohol and the specter of lethal violence.[61] In fact, the atrocious behavior of individual SS guards within the camp, such as that of Johann Unterhuber and Karl Ehmann, was linked, in part, to their consumption of alcohol, with Unterhuber's drinking resulting in "set-piece beatings and drunken night-time chicanery." Ehmann, for his part, became "notorious in the city for binge-drinking and wife-beating." Besides committing acts of brutality in the camp, he behaved violently as well beyond its boundaries—making a failed, drunken assassination attempt against a local Communist Party functionary, for example.[62] Ehmann's wife beating was itself a manifestation of the distorted hypermasculinity of the Nazi ideal. As Vandana Joshi notes in her study of gender and power in the Third Reich,

[57]Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 205.

[58]Stephen R. Haynes, "Ordinary Masculinity: Gender Analysis and Holocaust Scholarship," in *Genocide and Gender in the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Survey*, ed. Amy E. Randall (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 170.

[59]Jürgen Matthäus, Jochen Böhler, and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, *War, Pacification, and Mass Murder, 1939: The* Einsatzgruppen *in Poland* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 59.

[60]Angelika Benz, *Handlanger der SS: Die Rolle der Trawniki-Männer im Holocaust* (Berlin: Metropol, 2015), 212.

[61]Timothy Ryback, *Hitler's First Victims: The Quest for Justice* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 89.

[62]Dillon, *Dachau and the SS*, 39. Ehmann's failed attempt to kill the Communist leader involved shooting at his home, which resulted in the severe wounding of the man's wife.

such "masculine behavior ran like a red thread" through physical and sexual violence perpetrated by German men against both "Aryan" and non-Aryan women.[63]

A readiness for physical violence and a willingness to engage in brutality no doubt characterized these men and their behavior in the camps and, in some cases, in their private lives. Eugen Kogon, a former political prisoner at Buchenwald, described the SS block leaders (men ranging in rank from corporal to technical sergeant) as "hardened bullies and brutes." He also noted their habit of conducting "nocturnal invasions" when drunk, which involved visits to the barracks resulting in the "merciless punishment" of prisoners for infractions of camp rules, e.g., being beaten for wearing underwear or socks instead of the permitted shirt.[64] Beatings in the camps also involved a form of male competition among the SS guards. Richard Glazar, a survivor of Treblinka, remarked that, when an SS man witnessed a colleague beating a prisoner, he would often join in the brutality, and both would attempt to "outdo the other in order to demonstrate that he was 'better'" than his colleague.[65] The ability to drink more, or to inflict a "better" beating, were thus seen as manifestations of superior manliness.

Fellowship evenings, featuring alcohol, song, and performative acts of male dominance, constituted a celebratory ritual for the perpetrators in the concentration camp system. The introduction of these SS "social evenings" at Buchenwald, one survivor later reported, was a "special chapter" that began with a "magnificent open air celebration in 1938 … There were eating and drinking sprees that almost invariably ended in wild orgies."[66] The public nature of such rituals, as well as their conduct within or near the camp complex, offer insight into the way in which the perpetrators remade the camp spaces into sites of celebration. Such activities also underline how alcohol was incorporated into a ritual of orgiastic excess, whether of a sexual or violent nature. In addition, the culinary and sexualized extravagance of such celebrations, especially within the sight of prisoners, served as a further symbol of the ritualistic dehumanization and emasculation of the camp's inmates.

The SS's ritualistic appropriation of the camps' killing spaces could be seen even more dramatically in one of its celebrations at Auschwitz. Filip Müller, a Jewish member of the *Sonderkommando* charged with the cremation of those killed in the gas chambers, recalled a party celebrating the promotion of Johann Gorges to the rank of *Unterscharführer* (sergeant). The party itself was less significant than the location where it took place: it was held in the office of the senior SS man, the *Kommandoführer*, i.e., in a room separated from the cremation chamber by a single door. With the party in "full swing," hundreds of bodies awaiting cremation lay literally within feet of the drunken revelers.[67] Müller further described an office table spread with "delicacies from all over the world," as well as ample amounts of Polish vodka and cigarettes for the celebrants: the SS men "sat round the table eating and

[63]Vandana Joshi, *Gender and Power in the Third Reich: Female Denouncers and the Gestapo, 1933–1945* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 189.

[64]Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them*, rev. ed., trans. Heinz Norden (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1950), 51-52, 79-80. In periods of extremely cold weather, the prisoners sought to stay warm by adding more layers to their clothing. See *The Buchenwald Report*, ed. and trans. David A. Hackett (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 49.

[65]Benz, *Handlanger der SS*, 213-14.

[66]Kogon, *Theory and Practice of Hell*, 118. See also *The Buchenwald Report*, 44.

[67]Filip Müller, *Eyewitness Auschwitz: Three Years in the Gas Chambers*, ed. and trans. Susanne Flatauer (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 1979), 93.

drinking. One of them had brought his accordion and was playing folk and pop songs with the others joining in."[68] The party ended around midnight, as the drunken guests left the crematoria building. Drinking rituals and the act of celebration at a site of mass murder served here to normalize and justify the existence of the killing space, to cement male camaraderie, and to bind the perpetrators in a shared sense of purpose at a location of extreme transgressive violence. Selections on the arrival ramp at Auschwitz were another instance involving the combination of alcohol, mass murder, and celebratory ritual. As an SS doctor recalled, "a certain number of bottles were provided for each selection and everybody drank and toasted the others" during the process. He also noted that "one could not stay out of it," i.e., the drinking and toasting.[69] Once again, the requirement for everyone to participate in the ritual of drinking and toasting to mass murder bound the perpetrators to the act—and to each other.

In the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, SS fellowship evenings constituted an important ritual for washing away "grisly experiences" in a flood of free beer and schnapps, served with "pork schnitzel and fried potatoes." For SS personnel, the camp's canteen became a ritual site of celebration and camaraderie, especially for the single men, and alcohol was available every day at lunch and until late at night. On Sundays, in fact, "the tap often ran all day."[70] This last example most closely aligns with the purpose of such fellowship evenings, as envisioned by *Reich* Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police, Heinrich Himmler. In January 1942, Himmler discussed the "hard duty" of men charged with the "elimination, in its most drastic form, of the enemies of the German people." He noted that men tasked with such duties were at risk of "damaging their character" and becoming "brutalized." His solution to this danger called for maintaining "strict discipline" within the ranks and for conducting "comradely gatherings" with food, music, and alcohol on evenings following mass killing actions. He warned, however, that such gatherings must "never end with alcohol abuse…"[71] As events in the camps, the ghettos, and the killing fields nevertheless demonstrated, Himmler's repeated exhortations on the moderate use of alcohol, whether meant as a general admonition or a strict injunction, repeatedly fell on deaf ears.

The Role of Song and Music in Celebratory Ritual

The perpetrators' integration of music and song during and after acts of mass murder offers an important perspective on the nature of their celebratory rituals. During the Third Reich, song played a key role in promoting the creation of "imagined communities" within Nazi paramilitary units. This was seen, for example, in the party's adoption of the martial and apocalyptic *Horst-Wessel-Lied* as its anthem, a song that also became a key ritualistic aspect of political mobilization in the Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*, or HJ). In his memoir about the Third Reich, Alfons Heck, a high-ranking member of the HJ, recalled: "No political organization in the history of world sang as much as the Hitler Youth; it was a tool to

[68] Müller, *Eyewitness*, 94.

[69] Quoted in Lifton, *Nazi Doctors*, 193. For SS drinking on the selection ramp, see also Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, trans. Barbara Vedder (New York: Penguin, 1967), 35.

[70] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016), 272-73.

[71] Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen (Ludwigsburg), Daily Order Nr. 5, "Polizei-Einsatzstab Südost, Ch. d. St.-, Veldes, Betr.: A) Bekanntgabe eines Befehls RFSSuChdDtPol" [January 9, 1942], 503 AR-Z 9/1965, Bd. I, Unbekannt, Tatort Veldes Jugoslawien.

bind us together in the common cause of Germany … When we roared … 'Today Germany belongs to us and tomorrow the world,' … it was a cry of utter conviction."[72] In a directive of February 22, 1942, Himmler similarly underlined the significance of song and music for building group camaraderie and for creating the right atmosphere for SS and police fellowship evenings.[73] It is important to note that, under National Socialism, song was an "ideologized propaganda tool," especially in the party's paramilitary organizations.[74] Under fascism, it, and music more generally, were crucial for "expressing an ideology suffused with anger, hatred, and violence." In fact, songs with aggressive lyrics served to "prime aggressive thoughts, perceptions, and behavior," particularly when combined with alcohol consumption.[75]

Song was also a method for expressing ideological belief and personal commitment. In his memoir, Rudolf Höss, the SS commandant of Auschwitz, wrote about the bellowing of "old battle songs of defiance" after he and some of his *Freikorps* comrades had been convicted of a political murder in 1924.[76] In this case, song was used as a means of protest, but in the SS and police corps, singing and music became an element of celebratory ritual, especially in the wake of mass killings. In one particularly horrific example, a Jewish woman recalled the aftermath of a killing operation at Przemyśl: "I smelled the odor of burning bodies and saw a group of Gestapo men who sat by the fire, singing and drinking."[77] For these Gestapo men, "victory celebrations" proved to be the order of the day, and these festive libation rituals followed every "liberation from the Jews," i.e., killing action.[78]

One wonders what types of song Gestapo men would have sung around a bonfire of burning corpses to commemorate the occasion, but it does not seem implausible that they, like many of their colleagues, might have chosen ones from the Nazi antisemitic repertoire—such as one SA favorite that included the lyrics: "When Jewish blood drips from the knife, then things go twice as well."[79] George Mosse identified the methods by which both poetry and song became instruments, during the interwar period, of German nationalists, who used them to promote concepts of camaraderie, sacrifice, and "the ideal

[72]Alfons Heck, *A Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days When God Wore a Swastika* (Phoenix, AZ: Renaissance House Publishers, 1985), 103. See also Wolfhide von Königs, *Kriegstagebuch einer jungen Nationalsozialistin: Die Aufzeichnungen Wolfhilde von Königs, 1939–1946*, ed. Sven Keller (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2015), 46-47, 142, 146, 158, 172, 186, 194; Inge Myrick, *The Other Side! The Life Journey of a Young Girl through Nazi Germany* (Phoenix, AZ: Acacia, 2006), 26.

[73]US Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive, Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb. Nr. 35/44/41 [Feb. 22, 1941], reel 3, RG-68.035M (Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt SS).

[74]Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of Labor: Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933–1945*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 254.

[75]Nancy S. Love, *Trendy Fascism: White Power Music and the Future of Democracy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 2, 104, 117. Love's study, though focused on contemporary white-supremacist groups, offers important and relevant insights into the use of song and music to generate hatred and spur acts of political or racial violence, and thus has clear applicability to the use of both under Nazism.

[76]Rudolf Höss, *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*, ed. Steven Paskuly, trans. Andrew Pollinger (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 63.

[77]Klaus-Michael Mallmann, "'Mensch, ich feire heut' den tausendsten Genickschuß': Die Sicherheitspolizei und die Shoah in Westgalizien," in *Die Täter der Shoah: Fanatische Nationalsozialisten oder ganz normale Deutsche?*, ed. Gerhard Paul (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), 119.

[78]Ibid.

[79]Brian Murdoch, *Fighting Songs and Warring Words: Popular Lyrics of Two World Wars* (London: Routledge, 1990), 126.

of manliness as symbolic of personal and national regeneration."[80] In this case, not only the lyrics but also the volume and intensity of the song signified camaraderie, vocal aggression, and belligerent masculinity.[81] Michael Kater has similarly argued that music and song in the Third Reich served the regime's martial goals and its vision of gender roles by promoting soldierly values among boys and young men—domesticity and childbearing among girls and young women.[82]

For the paramilitary formations of the Nazi Party, heavy drinking combined with the act of singing served as "an inspiration for political battle" and as an important ritual in terms of both emphasizing male camaraderie and advertising the group's readiness to use terror against one's enemies.[83] In Cologne on March 13, 1927, a day of local Jewish community elections, a group of forty party members marched past the synagogue in the Roonstrasse, bellowing "provocative antisemitic songs." Individual marchers then began to "bump into" Jews leaving the synagogue, which led to a brawl in which three Jews received knife wounds.[84] In another instance, an SA unit marched through a Berlin suburb singing: "We are the Nazi guys from the murderer unit of Charlottenburg."[85]

Song also became an expression of community, camaraderie, and shared values in the wake of mass murder. For example, a unit of SS cavalrymen returning from a mass killing in the city of Mozyŕ "marched back into town singing like a group of recruits back from a field exercise."[86] In another instance, a group of Gestapo men, *Wehrmacht* soldiers, and civil servants marched back to the Novy Sącz (Neu Sandez) Gestapo headquarters singing the *Horst-Wessel-Lied*, after having just executed some three hundred Jews.[87] In both cases, the use of song was not only an expression of shared camaraderie and male bonding, but also a demonstration of political belief. The songs were also sung in communal spaces, with the troops in marching ranks—an all-in-one public affirmation of their acts, combined with military and celebratory ritual.

Music, like song, was sometimes incorporated into the ritual of mass murder as well. At a killing site in the Ukrainian village of Gerasimovka, for example, a group of intoxicated German policemen murdered groups of civilians and Soviet prisoners-of-war to the accompaniment of accordion music played by a unit member. And, at the Janov forced labor camp near Lvov, the German staff even created a special orchestra to accompany "tortures, atrocities, and shootings" that the SS conducted there.[88] In a similar case, specially selected SS and police personnel murdered eight thousand Jewish men, women, and children at Majdanek

[80]George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 22. The use of song to build camaraderie can also be seen in the American West. See Moore, *Cow Boys and Cattle Men*, 129.

[81]For an insightful discussion of the ways in which song and music can be used to generate hatred and spur acts of political or racial violence, see Love, *Trendy Fascism*.

[82]Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and their Music in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 141-42.

[83]Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde*, 454; Jay W. Baird, *To Die for Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 79.

[84]Walter, *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt*, 200.

[85]Kühne, *Rise and Fall of Comradeship*, 33.

[86]Henning Pieper, *Fegelein's Horsemen and Genocidal Warfare: The SS Cavalry Brigade in the Soviet Union* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 108.

[87]Kühne, "The Pleasure of Terror," 239-40.

[88]Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, Institute of Law, *Nazi Crimes in Ukraine, 1941–1944*, trans. V. I. Biley, S. I. Kazandy, and A. E. Sologubenko (Kiev: Naukova Dumka Publishers, 1987), 106, 212.

on November 3, 1943, as part of an operation called "Harvest Festival." The victims were forced to undress and then driven into prepared ditches, where they were shot—as "Viennese waltzes, tangos, and marches" blared on loudspeakers. After the last victim had been killed and the music fell silent, "several volunteers from the [Majdanek] camp SS who had participated in the shootings returned to their quarters and held a wild party, drinking much of the vodka they had received as a special reward; some did not even bother to wash off the blood from their boots before they reached for the bottle."[89] The act of SS men celebrating with the remains of their victims still adhering to their uniforms was a result of neither coincidence nor laziness, but instead a visible sign to their fellow comrades of one's "toughness" and "hardness"—and thus a reflection of the SS's own hypermasculine ideal.

The foregoing discussion of the role of song suggests three key points. In the first place, music and song were expressions of political, martial, and ideological identity for Nazi Party organizations, not primarily entertainment activities. Second, music and song played an important role in the ritual and ceremony of the Third Reich, ranging from military fanfares to antisemitic lyrics bellowed by SA men in taverns. After the outbreak of war, this pattern of celebratory ritual was integrated into the carrying out of mass murder. Finally, music was used in various party organizations, from the Hitler Youth to the black-and-green legions of Himmler's SS and police forces, to define gender roles and promote the "masculine" virtues of duty, camaraderie, toughness, and martial identity.

In the end, singing and drinking were ritual acts of celebration that served as mechanisms for promoting both male bonding and identification with the task of murder. Indeed, the use of songs to express masculinity and aggression, and to celebrate violence, was a key ritual of male bonding and another manifestation of "hardness." This held for those assembled in a bar, or, as in the case of the *Einsatzgruppen*, for those who gathered together in the countryside, after carrying out executions, for "diversion and recreation" and for the singing of songs around evening campfires.[90] It also held for the actions of an SS unit in Poland, whose members arrived at a local hospital and "immediately executed all the Polish wounded, and attacked the nurses, who were soon stripped and raped." A German witness testified that, "when we could come back that night—the SS had relieved us—there was tumult on the execution grounds. Soldiers from all the units, SS, Ukrainians, were playing flutes and singing, and there I saw something so frightening and horrible I can hardly describe it, fifty years later."[91] On this night and at this hospital, killing, sexual violence, alcohol consumption, and song each symbolized the toughness and masculinity of the individual. But they also marked the creation of a fraternity of mass murderers.

Barroom Celebrations

While song was used as a mechanism for building group solidarity and promoting male bonding, the SS and the police also created exclusively masculine spaces in which to celebrate acts of aggression and mass murder. In the East, unit bars became sites for "facilitating

[89] Wachsmann, *KL*, 331.

[90] Michael A. Musmanno, *The Eichmann Kommandos* (Philadelphia, PA: Macrae Smith Company, 1961), 171. In this case, SS *Standartenführer* Walter Blume organized these events for the men under his command.

[91] Christian Ingrao, *The SS Dirlewanger Brigade: The History of the Black Hunters*, trans. Phoebe Green (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2011), 115.

hypermasculine behaviors," including heavy drinking, singing, telling coarse jokes, and boasting of one's prowess with a weapon.[92] Men returning from the killing fields used alcohol as a means to relax, relieve their stress, and relive their experiences.

Specific rituals such as excessive drinking and song were often used in these locations to emphasize Nazi masculine ideals, including the values of hardness, camaraderie, and violence. A group of SS men in a bar in the Polish town of Wejherowo, "who had obviously just come from a shooting," joked about how the "damned brains" of the victims "just squirted everywhere."[93] Similarly, Marianna Kazmierczak, a seventeen-year-old Polish girl working at a restaurant in Zakrzewo, testified that SS men routinely gathered there to drink beer and schnapps, and to celebrate after carrying out mass killings in the fall of 1939: "Finally, they were half drunk, and the mood was very merry, as if they were intoxicated. They sang and danced." She also noted that "such drinking bouts were repeated after every mass shooting … sometimes several times a week. The drinking bouts went on into the late hours."[94]

Kazmierczak's recollections are instructive in three respects. First, her testimony not only highlights the celebratory nature of these events, replete with plentiful supplies of alcohol and group singing, but also clearly suggests that this was an established ritual—one that followed killing actions, with such celebrations occurring, in some cases, several times a week. Second, the integration of singing into the ritual celebration of mass murder highlights the importance of the integrative function of song in these drinking bouts, while also exemplifying the vocalization of male camaraderie and shared beliefs. Finally, excessive drinking, coupled with attempts by some of the participants to rape her, once again emphasize, on the one hand, the hypermasculine ideal that characterized the perpetrators and their actions and, on the other, the normalization of acts of physical and sexual violence by these men.

After the killings—the ultimate expression of male dominance—some of the men sought to exert their power, as this suggests, through forced or consensual acts of sexual domination. For some perpetrators, participation in mass killing also constituted a means of seeking female approval or sexual gratification, thus offering another insight into the methods by which murder became an overt symbol of masculine prowess. One German policeman, for example, after returning from a killing action, sought to impress a German secretary by showing her his bloodstained boots and uniform. Such acts of performative masculinity also intersected with acts of sexual violence, as demonstrated by those SS men who "often returned drunk from the *Aktion* and went to the [German] women's dormitory … They dragged women from their rooms and, as another secretary put it delicately, 'sought our company.'"[95]

Members of Police Battalion (PB) 61 established a bar outside the Warsaw Ghetto, and their actions perfectly illustrated the use of ritual space to celebrate murder and incite additional killing. The three companies of PB 61, which were just some of the police units involved in the murder of Jews and other putative enemies of the Third Reich, were transferred to the Warsaw Ghetto in January 1942, to serve as guards. The Krochmalna Bar near

[92]Miller et al., "Alcohol, Masculinity, Honour and Male Barroom Aggression," 137.
[93]Matthäus, Böhler, and Mallmann, *War, Pacification, and Mass Murder*, 70.
[94]Ibid., 78.
[95]Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 110-11.

the ghetto provided a place for off-duty policemen to engage in "drinking orgies" (*Sauforgien*), and the bar itself became a site of commemoration of, and male competition over, murder. The bar, which was "decorated" with a light fixture shaped like the Star of David and which had walls covered with antisemitic murals, provided a space for celebrating atrocities. One mural showed a Jew bending over to retrieve some food, as a policeman levels his rifle and fires at him.[96] In this instance, "art" reflected reality, for the unit's members routinely shot Jews involved in trade along the ghetto boundaries and within the ghetto. Besides aptly demonstrating a lethal and dominant act over one's victim, the (phallic) image of a policeman using his weapon also embodied the ideal of masculinity propagated among SS and policemen prior to and during the war. A willingness and capability to use their weapons was one thing that established the masculinity of these men in their own eyes, and in the eyes of the SS leadership.[97] In such cases, weapons symbolized "an essential element" in the "sharing" and "construction of masculine fraternity."[98] In fact, the bar's very door served as a tally board for the unit, with an estimated five hundred notches arrayed in groups of five—the number of Jews murdered by its patrons.[99]

During a postwar investigation of the unit's activities in Warsaw, one state prosecutor commented that "victory celebrations" (*Siegesfeiern*) were a customary part of the unit's ritual after mass executions.[100] The members of PB 61 were, then, not the only policemen involved in a competition to see who could kill the most people. Two Austrian policemen who had participated in the liquidation of the Jewish ghetto of Boryslaw in February 1943, gathered to drink schnapps after killing some six hundred men, women, and children, and then began to argue about who had killed more Jews.[101] Such "contests" for dominance and recognition also extended to the senior ranks of the SS, as Higher SS and Police Leaders (Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer) also competed "with each other as to their 'scores.'"[102]

Competition over the number of victims, like the act of consuming more alcohol than one's comrade, served as a visible demonstration of one's masculinity, and appears to have been common within the ranks of the SS and the police. As a former policeman with PB 9 testified: "I also know that several [men] kept exact count of the number of people they had shot. They also bragged among themselves about the numbers."[103] By contrast, SS

[96]Stefan Klemp, *Freispruch für das „Mord-Bataillon"* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1998), 49.

[97]For Hermann Göring's so-called shooting order, see Erich Gritzbach, ed., *Hermann Göring: Reden und Aufsätze* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1939), 17-18; Haynes, "Ordinary Masculinity," 170; Dillon, *Dachau and the SS*, 185. Dillon cites Himmler's order to have homosexual SS men brought to a concentration camp to "be shot while trying to escape." This was a situation in which the use of a weapon was intended to prove the masculinity of the shooter while, at the same time, emphasizing the emasculation and lack of masculinity of the intended victim.

[98]Ulf Mellström, "Changing Affective Economies of Masculine Machineries and Military Masculinities? From Ernst Jünger to Shannen Rossmiller," *Masculinities and Social Change* 2, no. 1 (2012): 5.

[99]Klemp, *Freispruch*, 48-49. The name Krochmalna was taken from a street in the ghetto where Jews attempted to trade goods for food with the outside world."

[100]Jürgen Matthäus, "An vorderster Front: Voraussetzungen für die Beteilung der Ordnungspolizei an der Shoah," in Paul, *Täter der Shoah*, 157.

[101]Thomas Geldmacher, *"Wir Wiener waren ja bei der Bevölkerung beliebt": Österreichische Schutzpolizisten und die Judenvernichtung in Ostgalizien, 1941–1945* (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2002), 117-19.

[102]Richard Breitman, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 92.

[103]Mallmann et al., *Deutscher Osten*, 132. Police Battalion 9, along with Police Battalion 3, were the two battalions that served with the *Einsatzgruppen* in the occupied East. For a discussion of their activities, see

members and policemen who refused to murder, or who attempted to avoid shooting, couched their opposition in terms of their own weakness, rather than on moral grounds, making themselves a target for feminized epithets such as "limp dick" (*Schlappschwanz*) or "little mama's boy" (*Muttersöhnchen*)—and thus a ready foil for the prevalent masculine ideal.[104] In this sense, killing became a direct reflection of male toughness and masculinity. One Gestapo agent in the Polish city of Tarnów similarly used mass killings as a type of manhood ritual for his own son, bringing the seventeen-year-old along to "teach him how to shoot the Jewish captives."[105]

Celebration of mass murder extended to ritual celebrations of the "whole numbers" of victims killed—such as the barroom festivity organized by one intoxicated Gestapo man, who had a beer coaster pinned to his blouse with the number 1,000 written on it in red ink. As he departed the bar, he drunkenly exclaimed, as he and his colleagues caroused in a "drinking-bout" (*Zechgelage*): "Man, today I'm celebrating my thousandth shooting of someone in the back of the neck [Genickschuß]."[106] In another incident, a witness testified about a conversation he had had in 1942 with a policeman who bragged about having killed two thousand people, and who, when told by witness that this was a "reason to celebrate," "beamed with joy" and responded: "That's what we did!"[107] As Saul Friedlander has observed, men who kept count of their victims experienced a twofold sense of "intoxication" (*Rausch*): the psychological "elation stemming from repetition, from the ever larger numbers of the killed other," combined with the physical act of celebratory drinking rituals.[108]

For the SS and policemen in the East, the possession and use of a firearm were in themselves a masculine privilege. In a telling contrast, female SS concentration guards working in the "old *Reich*" were not allowed to have firearms—though they were permitted to inflict brutal punishments.[109] As Elissa Mailänder has noted, restrictions on the use of firearms by female guards was part of a "gendered taboo" suggesting that "women lacked the physical and mental capacity necessary to handle a pistol."[110] Yet, this prohibition did not apply to female guards at Majdanek and Auschwitz, where female guards were permitted

Stefan Klemp, *"Nicht Ermittelt": Polizeibataillone und die Nachkriegsjustiz. Ein Handbuch* (Essen: Klartext, 2005), 78-84, 88-103.

[104]Kühne, "The Pleasure of Terror," 241; Hans Buchheim, *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, vol. 1: *Die SS: Das Herrschaftsinstrument Befehl und Gehorsam* (Munich: DTV, 1967), 255. The use of gendered insults to denote alleged weakness or femininity was not unique to Nazi Germany, but can be found in the socialization process of many military organizations. See Frank J. Barrett, "The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the US Navy," *Gender, Work, and Organizations* 3, no. 3 (1996): 133.

[105]Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 94.

[106]Mallmann et al., *Deutscher Osten*, 37.

[107]Ibid., 47.

[108]Saul Friedlander, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 110.

[109]Kimberly Allar, "Ravensbrück's Pupils: Creating a Nazi Female Guard Force," *Lessons and Legacies XIV: The Holocaust in the 21st Century*, paper at Claremont-McKenna College, Nov. 6, 2016. In a similar way, German women were lectured about the perils of alcohol use, a message that apparently found little resonance among the female SS guards at Ravensbrück. See Sarah Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women* (New York: Doubleday, 2014), 20, 26, 141, 376.

[110]Elissa Mailänder, *Female SS Guards and Workaday Violence: The Majdanek Concentration Camp, 1942–1944*, trans. Patricia Szobar (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2015), 253. It is interesting

firearms—an indication of the wider latitude enjoyed by SS personnel in the occupied East.[111]

Acts of excessive drinking, combined with celebrations of mass killing, thus pointed to the importance of the barroom as a site for commemorating murder and for recognizing the "accomplishments" of the perpetrators. In one respect, the act of sharing drink and song with one's comrades before, during, or after a killing action served an important function with respect to group identity and group solidarity. Such activities were a continuation of prewar SA and SS rituals, of course, but the act of communal drinking was also an act of shared communal *responsibility*. By that token, a refusal to take part in this ritual could be interpreted as a rejection of the group and as a criticism of the group's actions. Otto Horn, an enlisted SS man, reported having been "threatened" by a fellow SS colleague because he had refused to drink alcohol with the group. It was important that Horn was seen as an "outsider"—in part, because he was not considered to be "as brutal as his colleagues."[112] One's degree of brutality determined one's status and established one's masculine toughness, whereas a refusal to participate in murder marked the nonconformist as a "coward," "shithead," or "weakling."[113]

Drinking Rituals and Sexual Violence

The relationship between alcohol and physical or sexual violence perpetrated against women offers another perspective for evaluating the actions of individual SS men, both within the camps and in the killing fields themselves. Numerous studies have examined the linkage between alcohol consumption and aggression more generally. In reviewing this literature, one study noted that it is "now well established, by both correlational and experimental studies, that alcohol consumption facilitates aggressive behavior."[114] While researchers and scholars continue to debate whether there is a direct causal linkage between alcohol consumption and sexual assault, research has pointed to the increased prevalence of violence and sexual assault when one or both of the involved parties have been drinking. Regardless of whether alcohol is involved, acts of sexual aggression by men, against both women and other men, are tied to the concept of masculinity and hypermasculinity, and have been described as "promoting forms of dominant hegemonic heterosexuality."[115] In her path-breaking study of sexual violence by German soldiers in the East, Regina

that these women primarily used their firearms to pistol-whip prisoners, a practice certainly influenced by the expectations of the male members of the SS.

[111]Ibid., 252; Edith Eva Foger, *The Choice: Embrace the Possible* (New York: Scribner, 2017), 60; Olga Lengyel, *Five Chimneys* (Chicago, IL: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1995), 108.

[112]Benz, *Handlanger der SS*, 219.

[113]Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 66, 72.

[114]Peter R. Giancola, Emily L. Helton, Abigail B. Osborne, Michael K. Terry, Angie M. Fuss, and Johnna A. Westerfield, "The Effects of Alcohol and Provocation on Aggressive Behavior in Men and Women," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 63, no. 1 (2002): 64.

[115]Jeanne Gregory and Sue Lees, *Policing Sexual Assault* (London: Routledge, 1999), 131. For a contemporary perspective linking hypermasculinity with cases of sexual assault in the US military, see Michael T. Crawford, "A Culture of Hypermasculinity is Driving Sexual Assault in the Military," *Huffington Post* (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-t-crawford/a-culture-of-hypermasculi_b_5147191.html).

Mühlhäuser has similarly identified such acts as a "proof of masculinity" among the perpetrators.[116]

With respect to alcohol and sexual assault, other investigations have found that "men anticipate feeling more powerful, sexual and aggressive after drinking alcohol"—and feelings of power or dominance, whether physical or sexual in nature, indeed characterized the male ideal in Nazi Germany.[117] In her study of the influence of culture in rape, Peggy Sanday has argued that, in "rape prone societies, social relations were marked by interpersonal violence in conjunction with an ideology of male dominance enforced through the control and subordination of women."[118] Though not a focus of her study, the hypermasculine ideal glorified under National Socialism perfectly fits Sanday's definition of a rape-prone society. In fact, the demise of the regime in 1945 led one postwar German observer to lament: "The dominance of the man, which was so strongly emphasized in the Third Reich, has collapsed."[119] The National Socialist preoccupation with procreation was an area in which the concept of hypermasculinity found its most visible expression—and the expression of hypersexual activity during the Third Reich, both consensual and transgressive, should therefore not be surprising, especially in the presence of alcohol consumption.[120]

In Nazi Germany, Dagmar Herzog has argued, "sexuality in the Third Reich was, after all, also about the invasion and control and destruction of human beings."[121] The colonial landscape of the East offered a ready-made environment for the invasion, control, and destruction of individuals. In this regard, Waitman Beorn makes a key point in his study of *Wehrmacht* operations in the East: "At the local level, sexuality in the East seems to have operated under a moral code different from that observed in Western Europe … German civil authorities (as well as military men) frequently abused alcohol to excess and participated in depraved sexual acts outside the pale of acceptability in the West."[122] In a secretly recorded conversation of German prisoners-of-war in November 1944, General Heinrich Eberbach, a *Wehrmacht* officer with extensive service on the Eastern Front, told a fellow prisoner: "I believe that the Führer issued an order for the East that the raping of women and girls should not be [considered] a criminal offence, but only as a disciplinary [matter]—given that terror was part of the rules of war."[123] In the East, physical conquest of territory, racial and gender-based concepts of superiority, and perceptions of male dominance all combined with excessive alcohol consumption to create a perpetrator mindset in which the

[116]Regina Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen: Sexuelle Gewalttaten und intime Beziehungen deutscher Soldaten in der Sowjetunion, 1941–1945* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2010), 77.

[117]Antonia Abbey, "Alcohol-Related Sexual Assault: A Common Problem among College Students," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol Supplement* 63, no. 2 (March): 118-28.

[118]Peggy Sanday, "Rape Free versus Rape Prone: How Culture Makes a Difference," in *Evolution, Gender, and Rape*, ed. Cheryl Brown Travis (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 337.

[119]Quoted in Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 86.

[120]Annette Timm, "Sex with a Purpose: Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and Militarized Masculinity in the Third Reich," in *Sexual and German Fascism*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 225-27.

[121]Dagmar Herzog, "Hubris and Hypocrisy, Incitement and Disavowal: Sexuality and German Fascism," in Herzog, *Sexuality and German Fascism*, 6.

[122]Waitman Beorn, *Marching into Darkness: The* Wehrmacht *and the Holocaust in Belarus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 172.

[123]Sönke Neitzel, ed., *Tapping Hitler's Generals: Transcripts of Secret Conversations, 1942–1945*, trans. Geoffrey Brooks (London: Frontline Books, 2007), 199.

prohibition of acts of sexual aggression existed "only on paper."[124] In fact, as one study of Nazi occupation policies has emphasized, "Violence against women and girls was part and parcel of the system of persecution established by the occupiers and their helpers."[125] This was why fellowship evenings often combined "gang rapes, torture, and drink" in the occupied East and in the concentration camp system as a whole.[126]

Such acts of sexual aggression demonstrated one's dominance, then. In addition, as Thomas Kühne has written, "abusing women in the occupied areas was the ultimate performative masculinity, that is, an assertion of the sovereignty of the male bond."[127] Such behavior symbolically castrated and feminized one's opponent by emphasizing his inability to protect his own women.[128] For the perpetrators of gang rapes, these were not simply or even primarily acts of sexual pleasure, but rather acts for creating group belonging, as "sexual gratification" was "secondary to the celebration of fraternity bonding and group pride."[129] Sexual violence, including sexual assault and acts of sexual humiliation, were readily apparent in the behavior of the SS, the police, and *Wehrmacht* soldiers in the occupied East, as well as in the concentration and extermination camps.[130]

This combination of sexual violence and humiliation can be seen in a number of examples involving SS guards and auxiliaries working in those camps. In Auschwitz, for instance, three SS men who "smelled like beer" raped Laura Varon and several of her fellow prisoners in their barracks.[131] Several other Auschwitz survivors similarly testified about the actions of SS guard Otto Moll at the cremation pits. Mel Mermelstein recalled one case in which Moll had selected twenty "beautiful" women from a newly arrived transport: "He had them undress and stand naked facing him in a single row. He then shot all of them, one by one, in full view of witnesses."[132] Moll routinely engaged, in fact, in rituals involving the sexual humiliation of his victims before killing them. Eyewitness Filip Müller similarly recalled that "Moll

[124]Jeffrey Burds, "Sexual Violence in Europe in World War II, 1939–1945," *Politics and Society* 37, no. 1 (2009): 38.

[125]Matthäus, Böhler, and Mallmann, *War, Pacification, and Mass Murder*, 77. In her study of sexual violence in the East, Regina Mühlhäuser estimates that 50 percent of all SS men ignored the ban on sexual intercourse with so-called racial inferiors. See Regina Mühlhäuser, "Between Racial Awareness and Fantasies of Potency: Nazi Sexual Politics in the Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union, 1942–1945," in Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth-Century, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 203.

[126]Ingrao, *Dirlewanger Brigade*, 85; Helm, *Ravensbrück*, 376-77.

[127]Kühne, "The Pleasure of Terror," 245.

[128]Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 80; Mühlhäuser, "Between 'Racial Awareness' and Fantasies of Potency," 200-1.

[129]Sanday, "Rape Free versus Rape Prone," 343. Sanday's example concerns a case of gang rape by a group of men in a university fraternity, but her argument also can be applied to the actions of the SS in the occupied East. Sanday's findings about the group-bonding motive for gang rape is supported by Dara Kay Cohen, *Rape during Civil War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 30.

[130]In addition to Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*, other important works on this subject include Sonja Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel, eds., *Sexual Violence against Women during the Holocaust* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010); Waitman Beorn, "Bodily Conquest: Sexual Violence in the Nazi East," in *Mass Violence in Nazi Occupied Europe: New Debates and Perspectives*, ed. David Stahel and Alexander Kay (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming). I would like to thank Waitman Beorn for sharing the prepublication draft of this chapter.

[131]Na'ama Shik, "Sexual Abuse of Jewish Women in Auschwitz-Birkenau," in Herzog, *Brutality and Desire*, 232.

[132]Mel Mermelstein, *By Bread Alone: The Story of A-4685* (Huntington Beach, CA: Auschwitz Study Foundation, 1979), 152.

had a morbid partiality for obscene and salacious tortures. Thus it was his wont to turn up in the crematorium when the victims were taking off their clothes … Like a meat inspector he would stride about the changing room, selecting a couple of naked young women and hustling them to one of the pits … In the end he shot them from behind so that they fell forward in the burning pit."[133] For Moll, sexual titillation and murder were conjoined in an act where the sexual humiliation of the victim became a key part of the ritual of destruction.

Accounts of sexual aggression toward males reveal similar instances involving perpetrators who, like Moll, were apparently "sexually excited" by the nakedness of their victims. One concentration camp survivor, Heinz Heger, witnessed "innumerable ritual floggings" of male prisoners in several camps: "The victim was tied to the notorious 'whipping post' in such a way as to make his buttocks arch upward above the rest of his body." Heger then described the reaction of the camp commandant supervising the flogging: "His eyes lit up with every stroke; after the first few his whole face was already red with lascivious excitement."[134] The nature of the ritualistic form of violence was not only sexualized in this case, but the latter also embraced elements of male dominance. Heger identified these floggings as "celebrations of torture," contending as well that he had witnessed SS concentration commanders who masturbated on "more than thirty occasions," as male prisoners were being beaten on their bare buttocks.[135] Public acts of sexual assault in front of prisoners, as well as acts of sexual violence (including the beating of male and female genitalia, as well as sexual mutilation), not only demonstrated the prisoners' lack of power, but also, more important, served as a symbol of the perpetrators' sexual power and dominance over their victims.[136]

Conclusion

In many respects, the relationship among alcohol, masculinity, sex, and violence permeated all aspects of the Nazi killing process in the camps, ghettos, and killing fields.[137] Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* provides one explanation for the sexualized violence committed by German men under National Socialism.[138] In his view, the creation of "soldierly" men resulted in a situation in which "heroic acts of killing take the place of the sexual act."[139] Theweleit failed to recognize, however, that killing was not some sort of act of Freudian transference for the perpetrators. Instead, acts of violence, such as murder, beating, and sexual assault, were all part of a larger expression of the hypermasculine ideal under the Third Reich. This ideal was most apparent in the actions and rituals of the Nazi Party's paramilitary organizations, including the SA, the SS, and the police. Drinking rituals and the consumption of alcohol emerged, on the one hand, as important expressions of masculinity and toughness; on the other, they facilitated acts of violence, while also serving as masculine rituals for celebrating mass murder.

[133]Müller, *Eyewitness Auschwitz*, 141.

[134]Quoted in Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies:* vol. 2: *Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, trans. Erica Carter and Chris Turner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 300-1.

[135]Ibid., 301.

[136]Mühlhäuser, *Eroberungen*, 98-99; Müller, "Männlichkeit und Gewalt," 136-37; Burds, "Sexual Violence," 45-46.

[137]For more on these activities in the killing fields, see Edward B. Westermann, "Stone Cold Killers or Drunk with Murder? Alcohol and Atrocity in the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30, no. 1 (2016): 1-19.

[138]For an extended discussion and critique of Theweleit's work, see Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 240-46.

[139]Quoted in Ibid., 244.

The performative nature of such killings was striking. Two final examples clearly demonstrate the blending of alcohol, celebration, and ritual in the killing process. In the fall of 1941, German police officials organized a hunting expedition during an inspection tour in the region of Radun in Belarus. Disappointed by their failure to find sufficient game in the forest, the men decided to enjoy a "drunken lunch"—and then rounded up over forty Jews from the town's ghetto. Leo Kahn, a witness to the events, recalled that "these unfortunates were trucked about a mile and a half from the town, unloaded and told to scatter … They did as they were told, and the Germans, using the trucks to fire from as if they were on an African safari, gunned them all down."[140] The hunt, an act invested with manliness and masculine strength, became part of a competitive killing ritual.[141] Killing as a type of game or contest tied to drinking rituals can also be seen in a final example involving *Luftwaffe* pilots at an airfield in the occupied East. According to Yehuda Lerner, a Holocaust survivor who was part of a group of prisoners responsible for constructing buildings at the airfield: "At night they'd get drunk and amuse themselves by shooting Jews, usually in the head … Their game was to arrive from behind, press the barrel to your temple and try to blow your eyes out."[142] *Luftwaffe* pilots were men known for heavy drinking, male bravado, and militarized masculinity, who routinely celebrated aerial kills with double shots of brandy: they not only competed with one another over the number of enemy aircraft shot down during the daytime, but then, during nocturnal drinking bouts, extended their competition to the ritual murder of Jewish forced laborers.[143]

According to a Soviet propaganda leaflet from 1943 about German atrocities against Jews and other political prisoners in the occupied East, "These Hitlerite dogs, bribed to the extreme, were always drunk and corrupt, stained by human blood, they tortured people worse than cattle … For them murdering a person is like an amusement and a bestial pleasure."[144] Despite its propagandistic purpose, the writer of this tract correctly captured the linkage among alcohol, violence, and celebration for many perpetrators. For men like Otto Moll, murder was indeed a source of sexual amusement and a bestial pleasure. More important, for thousands of perpetrators in the SS and the police, such acts came to reflect their own perceptions of masculine identity, in which a bottle in hand at a killing site, or shots of vodka at a post-execution banquet, were normal, if not integral, aspects of the overall ritual of mass murder. The Nazi regime justified such acts on racial and ideological grounds, but the translation of beliefs into actions was facilitated by a hypermasculine ideal propagated among Himmler's political soldiers—an ideal that combined rituals of drinking, song, and celebration, in which murder emerged as the ultimate measure of performative masculinity.

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[140]Leo Kahn, *No Time to Mourn: A True Story of a Jewish Partisan Fighter* (Vancouver: Laurelton Press, 1978), 57.

[141]For a discussion of the relationship of masculinity to hunting, see J. A. Mangan and Callum McKenzie, *Militarism, Hunting, Imperialism: "Blooding" the Martial Male* (London: Routledge, 2010).

[142]Claude Lanzmann, *Sobibor, October 14, 1943, 4:00 pm* (Paris: Les films Aleph, 2001).

[143]Heinz Knoke, *I Flew for the Führer: The Story of a German Fighter Pilot*, trans. John Ewing (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1953), 31, 62, 67, 70, 111, 136, 142, 151-52.

[144]Wendy Lower, *The Diary of Samuel Golfard and the Holocaust in Galicia* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2011), 112.